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SUBJECT: EU WILL PUBLISH NEW SANCTIONS AGAINST BURMA ON
AUGUST 14

REF: STATE 83598

Classified By: USEU Political M-C Christopher Davis for reasons 1.4b/d

11. (C) SUMMARY. Following the EU's swift and strong public condemnation of Aung San Suu Kyi's conviction, Poloff discussed the case on August 12 with the EU Council Secretariat, per reftel. If there are no objections from Member States to proposed EU sanctions, they will be published in the Official Journal on August 14. The Secretariat is assessing next steps, with apparent focus on a "Group of Friends" meeting on the margins of UNGA. The EU Secretariat forecasts that a coordinated approach among EU member states, and with the U.S., will not be easy. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) Leo Nordholdt (protect), EU Council Secretariat Desk Officer for SE Asia, told Poloff on August 12, "After an internal debate that lasted as long as the trial itself, a compromise was reached entailing the imposition of a relatively modest set of new sanctions, that could be enacted quickly, in the case of a guilty verdict, whatever the sentence: visa ban for the judges involved in the trial and an asset freeze for a number of enterprises." Nordholdt, as the record-keeper for Member States to voice their disagreements with the Presidency's proposals, had received no objections. Nordholdt refused to share the financial specifics of the sanctions; however, he said he fully expects the publication of the new restrictive measures in the Official Journal of the EU on August 14.

13. (C) The EU is preparing for the Burmese regime's next moves. Nordholdt noted that the regime's verdict gives it the possibility to release Aung San Suu Kyi "voluntarily" at some time later this year or early 2010. Nordholdt showed Poloff an internal EU paper assessing future possibilities, which included the option of Burma's participation in Ban Ki Moon's high-level meeting of the "Group of Friends of the Secretary General on Myanmar" on the margins of UNGA. According to the paper, "This meeting will be crucial to agree on a common way forward, and previous coordination is essential. It remains to be seen how far the U.S. and some EU Member States would go along with engagement, with Aung San Sui Kyi still under house arrest. The EU will continue to have difficulties to keep united."
MURRAY.

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